



Kathryn A. "Kitty" Bonham

August 13, 1928 - December 19, 2004

Reston, Virginia-Kathryn "Kitty" Bonham passed away at home in Reston, Virginia on December 19, 2004, after a short battle with cancer. Kathryn was the former Mayor of Hartford City, Indiana, was a member of the Indiana Standardbred Board of Regulations, and was a founder and long-time publisher of The Hoosier Horse Review. For the past decade, Kathryn was Horseman Relations Manager at Hoosier Park in Anderson, Indiana. Kathryn was born on August 13, 1928 in Fort Wayne, Indiana, the eldest daughter of Dr. Joy and Winifred Buckner. She graduated from Bluffton High School in 1946, and from Indiana University at Bloomington in 1950 with a Bachelor of Science in Education and Fine Arts. At Indiana University, Kitty was a member of Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority. In college, Kitty met her future husband, Robert W. Bonham, Jr. They were married at her parents' home in Bluffton in 1950. Kitty and Bob lived in Hartford City, where he practiced law until his death in December 1986. A devoted wife and mother, Kitty's interests included politics, standardbred horse racing, and golf. A long-time Republican Party activist, Kitty was a frequent local party official, serving as City Vice-Chair for four successful elections. She was a frequent delegate to the Indiana Republican State Convention, and was Blackford county chair for several Republican statewide candidates. Kitty was elected to the at-large seat on the Hartford City, Indiana city council in 1987, and served as Mayor of Hartford City from 1990-1991. A fourth-generation horsewoman, Kitty continued the family standardbred tradition. She owned and bred standardbred horses, which raced throughout the Midwest. These included a pacing mare she trained with one of her sisters, Joyce Buckner. Kitty's grandfather, Fred Terry, owned and published The Horseman and Fair World when it was based in Indianapolis. When the sport's leading publications reduced coverage of Indiana harness racing in the 1970s, and the Year Book eliminated race summaries altogether, Kitty founded a monthly newspaper, The Hoosier Horse Review, with her sister Joyce in 1977. Kitty owned and published the paper from 1977 to 1989 and again in the 1990s, writing copy, and selling subscriptions and advertisements, building the publication from a typewritten newsletter into a professionally printed monthly publication. At that time prior to the availability of racing information on the internet, The Hoosier Horse Review published complete results of all Indiana harness racing, as well as news reports on the Indiana harness industry. To encourage harness

racing in Indiana and provide chartered lines so Indiana horses could start at Pari-mutual tracks in surrounding states without qualifying, Kitty obtained her license as a clerk of course and charter in 1979. Kitty chartered harness racing at Indiana fairs for twenty-five years, including Grand Circuit racing several years at the Indiana State Fair in Indianapolis. Governor Robert Orr appointed Kitty to the Indiana Standardbred Board of Regulations in 1983. Kitty served on the Standardbred Board, which prior to pari-mutual was the governing body for harness racing in Indiana, until 1991. Kitty also was among the Blackford County businessmen and women who purchased the Montpelier, Indiana fairgrounds and track in 1985 for use as a training facility and local park. Kitty was secretary of the corporation, and served as clerk of course at that half-mile oval. After the state constitution was amended and pari-mutual legislation was enacted in Indiana, Kitty joined the staff at the then-under construction Hoosier Park at Anderson in 1994. Kitty was Public Information Officer during the initial 1994 and 1995 standardbred seasons, and continued as Horseman Relations Manager at Hoosier Park during both harness and thoroughbred race meets. She continued to work the 2004 Hoosier Park standardbred meet after she was diagnosed with cancer. Throughout her long life, Kitty was an avid artist, businesswoman and civic activist in Hartford City. She designed stained glass art windows for Arrowhead Glass Studio, produced commercial art and packaging design for other local businesses, and co-managed and promoted a long-running series of flea markets. She was active in numerous civic, charitable and social organizations, including the vestry at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Gas City, Indiana. Kathryn was honored by Indiana Governor Robert Orr as a "Sagamore of the Wabash." This is the highest honor bestowed by Indiana governors. Kitty's other affiliations included: Tri Kappa, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, several local literary and social organizations, and the American Cancer Society. Kitty was preceded in death by her husband Robert W. Bonham Jr., and by a sister Joyce Buckner Thompson, formerly of Warren, Indiana. Kitty is survived by her son and daughter-in-law, Rob and Sheila Bonham of Reston, Virginia, by a sister, Caroline Newell of Bluffton, and by three nephews. A memorial service will be held on Saturday, January 15, 2005 at 1:00 PM at Robert D. Loose Funeral Homes & Crematory, South Chapel; 200 W. 53rd Street; Anderson with visitation from 12-1:00 PM. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests memorial contributions to the Harness Horse Youth Foundation www.hhyf.org or the donor's favorite charity.